

# Offenses and Unforgiveness

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     blessings and greetings to each of you. In Jesus' worthy name, it's good to be here this morning. Appreciate what's been shared, the worship service and everything.
- Yes, we had a good week. Just too want to welcome Jake, Melody, and everyone else that's here today.
- It's such a blessing to be together. I appreciate what Brother James shared about our week, or not week, but a couple days, two days that we had in Colorado.
- I had a few notes written down too that were kind of the main thing that I took away, which was very similar to what James shared as far as the emphasis on the Word.
- Our people trying to find truth and to find God without the Word was mentioned. You know, a relationship with God or an experience with God without the Word.
- [ 1 : 12 ]     In fact, I think that was mentioned about, you know, when the youth meetings are coming up, so there's a lot of emphasis on that, a lot of praying about that.
- And I think that was the burden that our young people, especially, and older, but that we find God through His Word. We find truth through the Word of God.
- That's the authority and not just some experience. And so I was so blessed with that truth. And I think you all will be blessed for that as well.
- It was like God was speaking to us. And one of the things, too, was just the desire right away was expressed that we would be able to be disciples of Jesus and that we could, as men, just learn at the feet of Jesus and that He would be our master and our teacher.
- And so that was a blessing. And Brother Phil mentioned how it had snowed one night and the mountains around there were really nice and white.
- [ 2 : 19 ]     And he just mentioned how that the snow just piles up. It just piles up in the peaks. And then at the right time, it melts.
- And it goes and it waters its water, its life to the farmers, the ranchers and farmers. So they love to see that snow being piled up.
- And he gave that as a picture of us in the Word. You know, sometimes we, you know, Dan mentioned the Word and reading in the Old Testament and just meditating on the Word and how that the Word comes into us.
- You know, we might not need it or we need it right now, of course, but it's there for when we really need it. It's there. It melts into our heart. If we meditate and take this Word in and it becomes the law of our, how does it say, God will write His law upon our hearts.
- And if that Word is in us and then we run into trouble or we run into difficult times, at such times as we need, that Word comes to us. So let it pile up in your heart, just like that snow in the mountains.
- [ 3 : 39 ]     That was the message. Yeah, that really was a blessing. And then I just want to say a few words about something that really spoke to me as well.
- I think it was on Wednesday, the last day there, that Brother Aaron got Frank on the phone.

What's his last name? Tesla? Testa. There you go. Yeah, not Tesla. Let's see, how did I write it down? Yeah, I wrote down Testa.

Yeah, yeah, right. He's what, 85 years old? I know some of you, quite a few of you probably met him. 85-year-old man there that he's, I don't think he's in the hospital or was in the hospital necessarily, but he's going into assisted living.

And he is writing a book, and he's not quite done. It's his last project. He calls it his last project, you know, of his life.

[ 4 : 51 ] And I'm thinking, well, he'll probably minister to all those people in the assisted living place too. So it's probably not his last project, but as far as writing, and the title of his book is, I think it's, he said it's The Honeymoon Marriage.

And then he got him on the phone, on speakerphone, and we all just gathered around and listened, and we prayed for him then. But he just ministered to us. It was so amazing, just about loving our wives, and just, he had lost his wife.

And here he is, 85 years old, and just, I mean, God's word just flowed out of him. It was just, I never met him, but there was just such a life and such a zeal for God and a passion that just came out of that phone for about 10 minutes.

You know him, we'll learn, right? I met him. And it was just a beautiful thing. And it was the kind of thing that made me weep. So that was a real blessing.

And if I can be just a little bit like that when I'm 85, you know, that I go out with that kind of a passion and a zeal for God.

[ 6 : 07 ] So I think that's one other thought was, and I knew this was in the Bible, but in Psalm 138, it says that God's word, or that God magnifies his word above his name.

Higher than his name. Did you know that? That's amazing. That's really all we need to know, to know what God thinks of his word. It's very high.

Very, we will be judged by it someday. I want to talk today now about, and I don't know why this is on my heart, but about forgiveness.

Title of the message is Offenses and Unforgiveness. And it's something that I think we all as believers, as people, as humanity, we face this.

Jesus said that offenses will come. There will be things coming our way. In fact, and Jesus even is an offense to those that don't believe or to those that don't accept him.

[ 7 : 28 ] A stumbling block because they don't want to hear it. And a rock of offense, I think it says in one place. But this is something that we face, we deal with.

I know I do in my life. I had people in my past that I needed to forgive. And it took a while on some of those for God to show me that that actually was in my heart.

So I want to, why don't we turn to Matthew chapter 18. I would have really liked to just read the whole chapter and start where Jesus here is talking about being converted and becoming as little children as little children.

And then, I want to say, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself. In verse 4, as this little child. He took a little child and he set him in their midst.

And he said, whosoever shall humble himself like this little child. The same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And he goes on there. And then down in verse 8, he talks about offending little ones.

[ 8 : 53 ] The younger. Offending them. And that it would be better for a millstone to be hanged about that person's neck and so on.

But I think we're going to jump down to verse 21. There would have been a lot of other things in this chapter. But we'll go down to, but one thing I wanted to share is just God's heart for children.

God's heart for the younger. The young in the faith even. And the importance of not living a life or doing something that will offend.

Then in verse 21, it says, Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?

Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.

[ 9 : 57 ] You know, and it makes you wonder why Peter did this. What did Peter have in mind? Or what was he faced with? Or what was he going through? I mean, to come and ask that question.

I mean, it was almost like he wanted permission. Maybe about the eighth time I can stop forgiving. Maybe Jesus would say seven's pretty good. If you do seven times, you're an okay Christian.

Or what was he fishing for? What was he looking for? Or was he just trying to learn, maybe? I'm not sure. But maybe he had a brother that was giving him a hard time.

Or maybe he had a hard time with somebody else's character or makeup. And he just had to keep forgiving. We don't know. We don't read beyond this, really.

But either way, Jesus said 490 times. How about that? Well, who's going to keep track of 490 times and say, well, now it's 491.

[ 11 : 02 ] Now I don't have to. You see what I'm saying? Basically, Jesus is saying every time. That's what he's really saying. Very clearly. How many of those 490 times, by the way, would it be that my brother actually sinned?

Or it could, some of those times may have been just my own imagination or my own doing. But then Jesus goes on and says, therefore, is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king.

I thought about reading this closer toward the end, but I think we'll just keep reading here. The story of the certain king, which would take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But for as much as he had not to pay, the Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children and all that they had in payment would be made.

The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt.

[ 12 : 26 ] But the same servant, now here's the sad part, the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants which owed him a hundred pence. And he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what thou owest.

And the fellow servant fell at his feet, just like before, like this man had, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, I will pay thee all.

Same story, just a different person. But he would not. But went out and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done.

Then his Lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because you asked me.

[ 13 : 36 ]    Shouldest not thou have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth.

He was angry. And delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. And then Jesus says, So likewise, here's the lesson.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if from your hearts, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.

I don't know what the ratio is of the two debts. Somebody here might know that. But I do know that, and I've heard it before, I just never wrote it down.

But I do know that the servant that owed to his Lord was much more. And what was owed to him was just a fraction, maybe even a fraction of a percent.

[ 14 : 48 ]    Just that it was maybe instead of a hundred thousand, maybe it was 20 bucks or something. I don't know what that amount was. But that's not really the point.

The point is, what Jesus is telling us, though, as believers, is that, what have we been forgiven for?

What have I been forgiven for? That the cost of that was God on a cross. Our Lord, our Savior on a cross.

The payment was the blood of Jesus, the precious blood of a perfect lamb. That was the payment. And then I say, but you know what, Jeffrey, you owe me something.

You owe me an apology. Or, you know, I don't know. And then I make that a big deal, and I will not forgive you. That's huge.

[ 15 : 48 ]    That's really huge. And Jesus is pointing that out after Peter said, how often do I need to forgive?

Isn't that amazing? Then Jesus says this story. And I love how Jesus often, he makes his point with a story.

But he did say that this is how it is in the kingdom of heaven. This is how it is. I want to look at offenses a little bit.

Because Jesus said they will come. In Proverbs 18, verse 19, it says, A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.

And their contentions are like the bars of a castle. That was in Proverbs 18, verse 19. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.

[ 17 : 00 ]    And their contentions are like the bars of a castle. This is a real trap for us. That must be overcome.

And you know, we do overcome, don't we? We overcome these things. I don't think anyone here that I know has not overcome those.

Doesn't mean we don't have more to overcome. But I'm sure we have all been wronged. Right? In our past, there's probably not one person here that would say, No, I've never.

Nobody ever did anything to me. I've never met a person like that. And so we have overcome. Right? We've forgiven. We've been blessed with that grace.

But the Bible says that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. And sometimes just looking at this and sharing about it could even open that door for us to have more freedom and to forgive more.

[ 18 : 13 ]    I'll just share this. I was going to maybe later. But I heard a message on this subject probably close to 25 years ago.

And I was a Christian. I was born again. Go to church. I was excited about God and church life. And I forget.

I don't even know what the message was. But I'm sure it had something to do with forgiveness. And I realized through that message, in fact, that Sunday afternoon, I drove seven hours by myself.

God put me in a little minivan to drive from Ohio to northern Michigan by myself. And God began to deal with me about what I had just heard in the area of my own dad, my own father, that, yeah, he had wronged me.

There was a lot of scars, a lot of hurts, a lot of rejection. But I think probably for at least half the trip, maybe more, I cried out to God alone in that little minivan.

[ 19 : 25 ] And a lot of the pain and hurts that from my past came to my mind, to my memory. And I just chose to forgive. And I can say ever since then, that day, God gave me a compassion and a love for him that I never had before.

And I'm so glad that God set me free before my dad passed away. And it wasn't like I had a lot of bitterness, but just I was offended at him.

You know, that thing that kept me from really loving him. So I thought I would just share that, that that came to me through the word of God being preached.

So I trust that we just have open hearts in this whole subject. More than a conqueror. In Psalm 119, James was reading from that a little bit earlier when he was up here.

But it says, Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. Do you have great peace this morning?

[ 20 : 41 ] Do we have that great peace, or are we offended? That's in verse 165 in Psalm 119. Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.

Brother Dan was talking about the Old Testament this morning and how it is the word of God as well. I want to look at Joseph, the life of Joseph a little bit. When I think about somebody in the Bible having a reason or a right to be offended, I always think of Joseph.

Wow. What he went through. What he must have felt from those 11 brothers, or 10 brothers rather.

Not Benjamin, but the others. What he must have felt. The 11th of the sons of a prosperous, wealthy man.

He had a father that loved him dearly. He had the potential of becoming one of the most bitter people on earth with what was done to him.

[ 22 : 04 ] It's hard when bad people mistreat us, but it's much harder when it's family or close friends that let us down. These were his own brothers.

The ones that God had given him visions and or dreams. So now Joseph is taken to Egypt where he's sold to Potiphar as a slave.

We know what his brothers did. The first thing they did is they wanted to kill him. And then, was it Reuben that said no? And then they threw him into a pit.

And then later sold him for 20 pieces of silver. I thought about that. That means if they divided it up, they each got two pieces of coin. That's all they got for their brother.

What a cold-hearted bunch of men. Sold to Potiphar as a slave.

[ 23 : 13 ] Joseph knew that once you are a slave, you'll always be a slave. Your wife and your children will be slaves in that setting. It would have been one thing to have been born one, but to have been the son of a free man with an inheritance, that was another thing.

He assumed that his father believed him to be dead. He probably didn't expect that his family would ever find him. And yet, he worked hard and he did his best.

And he never gave up on God. We won't read that he ever became bitter or even offended. I'm sure there were hurts.

But he had faith in his God. After years of serving his master, a terrible thing happened. We know the story and how bad it was for Joseph.

How he was accused and ended up in prison. Possibly, he was put in prison until he died.

[ 24 : 25 ] I'm not sure how that was, but there was no... I never realized there was a sentence given to him or as far as when he would get out.

I'm not sure about that, that we can read that. But even in that dungeon, was Joseph a bitter man? No, he started serving.

He just served the other people, the men. He became well-liked and was like almost basically put in charge of the prison. He must have been a shining light in that dark place in the midst of the worst of society, evil and wicked men.

And even in this low point in his life, he must have often remembered his father and family back home in a faraway country. He very likely wondered about his younger brother Benjamin and whether his father was doing okay.

He probably prayed for them. Very likely prayed for them to his heavenly father, asking God. He even asked God to watch over them and probably, you know, we know he forgave his brothers.

[ 25 : 50 ] You know, it doesn't say that much about it, but when they came, you know, we know the story. When they came, he had forgiven them. So God used Joseph in this environment to encourage and inspire the men around him, so much so that he was put in charge of the prison.

And later God used him to what? Become the ruler of the whole country. It ended very well for Joseph. And then God ordained it so that his brothers came.

And it's one of the most amazing Old Testament stories. I just love the story of Joseph. But like I said, he had the potential. If he wouldn't have forgave those men, those brothers, he could have become a very bitter man.

And do you think God would have used him? Do you think he would have become the ruler of Egypt? I very highly doubt it. He probably stayed in prison.

Because he couldn't have encouraged others. And that's how it is today with us. That when we are in that state of offense and of bitterness, God is very limited as to how he can use us.

[ 27 : 11 ] We limit God, I should put it that way. After, it's amazing to me that after Christ has come, died on the cross, been resurrected, and sent the Holy Spirit, that church people still struggle with this thing.

We still struggle with this thing called offense and bitterness. I don't know about, you know, maybe there's some of you that just don't struggle with that, but when offenses come, it's something we have to deal with, I have to deal with in my own heart.

In John chapter 15, verse 12, there's just another verse there where Jesus commands us to love one another as he has loved us.

And the thought there is simply that true love doesn't hold bitterness or unforgiveness against another person. And at first I was thinking, well, not against Christians.

You know, but what about my neighbor? What about those people that are not even professing Christians? Can I at least have a grudge against them for what they do to us?

[ 28 : 33 ] No. I don't believe so. How are we going to save the sinners? How are we going to bring them to Christ and let Him save them if we're bitter at them?

Unforgiveness keeps God from forgiving us. We know that in the Lord's Prayer, it says very clearly that that God should forgive us according to how we forgive our debtors, our transgressors.

And then after the prayer, Jesus spoke about that subject. for if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Those are the words of our Lord.

Let's turn to Hebrews chapter 12, verse 14. Unforgiveness will defile a person and it will defile many others.

[ 29 : 57 ] Hebrews 12, verse 14. Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

I just want to look at that verse a little bit. It says that we should look diligently, we should be diligent, lest any man fail of the grace of God.

And by the way, that grace, that word grace is what we need. We need grace to be able to forgive. Sometimes we try to do all these things on our own strength and we're not very successful at it.

But when the grace of God, we ask God to help us, when we lean on God, on His grace, when we fail that, when we don't have that grace, then we need to seek it.

Lest any root, so there's a root in this thing called bitterness. There's a root that goes deep if we allow it. The longer we let it go, the deeper that root goes, the stronger it becomes, the more grip it has.

[ 31 : 26 ] And then it says, thereby many be defiled. Very seldom is a person bitter and no one else hears about it.

not saying it hasn't happened, but usually others become defiled by it as well. That's what that verse is talking about.

Then in verse 16, it says, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.

For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. I believe that Esau, the reason Esau is brought into this is because he was bitter.

He became very offended at this thing, but he himself, he caused the whole thing. He's the one that made the deal, sold his birthright for a bowl of soup.

[ 32 : 40 ] But then he later, he regretted that and he became very bitter and very upset. Those tears were not tears of repentance. But I do believe that later on, he did forgive his brother Jacob.

He did forgive him later on. We know how they met and how they fell on each other's neck and kissed. So that was amazing.

But Joseph, it seems like, had an attitude of forgiveness. Like he didn't allow that thing to bring him down and destroy him.

Many be defiled. But that root, many of these bondages and the root of this bondage of unforgiveness, we can have that uprooted.

We can pull that thing out and have a root of grace. I don't know if that's a biblical term, but have that replaced with the grace of God and the love of God where we will be a blessing to others.

[ 34 : 00 ] And sometimes when we forgive, I know that I've forgiven people that later on, I realized that they didn't even have a bad motive.

I was just judging them wrong. And that happens at times. Sometimes it's our own doing. Sometimes it's just their human ignorance or my human ignorance, but not with an evil intention.

Either way, as a Christian, whatever the motive was or wasn't, we are called to forgive. Is there a corruption of unforgiveness in our heart?

If so, it will lead to bitterness, which is a stronghold. I have notes here.

And by the way, this isn't all new. I actually preached some of this five years ago. And so some of these notes are from then. But unforgiveness can keep a person out of heaven.

[ 35 : 22 ] Again, what Jesus said about forgiving us as we forgive others. In Matthew 7, verse...

Well, I think it's in verse 12 here, but let me just see here. Matthew chapter 7. Jesus here said, Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, and we know this is the golden rule, do ye even so to them.

For this is the law and the prophets. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

In 1 John 3, 14, it says, We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

And then I had the question, Do we love all the brotherhood? Do we love? Or are we abiding in death? another line here is, Unforgiveness will prevent us from being fruitful spiritually.

[ 36 : 39 ] We know that in John chapter 15, it talks about abiding in Christ. And that if we abide in Christ, we will produce much spiritual fruit.

And again, it tells us that his commandment is to love one another as he has loved us. You know, this whole thing is one of Satan's devices.

It's one of his snares to trip us up so that we can't be used in God's kingdom. It hinders us from being used in God's kingdom.

And it hinders our prayers. in Mark chapter 11, verse 24.

Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

[ 37 : 46 ] And when ye stand praying, forgive, this is a very familiar verse, but when we stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought something against any, that your Father also, which is in heaven, may forgive you, your trespasses.

So what he's saying here is that when we're praying, when we're seeking God or we're just praying by ourselves or we're praying as a group or whatever we are doing, and that God brings something to mind that we need to forgive.

He just throws that in there. When you're praying, you're standing somewhere praying, forgive. Forgive. By the way, Matthew, yeah, I think I already read that verse about the golden rule.

I don't, you know, it says to do so even to them. I don't know about you, but I need much forgiveness and grace. I know my humanity and some of my weaknesses and I need to be forgiven.

But to do that to others, I want to also extend that to others. And what Jesus was really saying here is that we do to each other like we want to be.

[ 39 : 27 ] So, Brother Joe, if you want to be forgiven, you know, forgive me too. We need that. I need that. That is not to say that we overlook sin and that we say, well, you sin, but, you know, I'll just forgive you.

No, I think there is an accountability. I'm not talking about that kind of a thing, but just other areas where we make mistakes. We do not need to wait to forgive until asked for forgiveness.



You know, those that crucified Jesus, they didn't even ask for it at all. But Jesus forgave them. He said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

And sometimes we're like, well, I'll forgive you, but I want to see a little repentance first and then I'll think about it, right? Unforgiveness, this is the last one that I have as far as a note here, a subject note.

Unforgiveness will give Satan an advantage. A verse in 2 Corinthians 2 says, To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also.

[ 40 : 49 ] This is Paul talking. For if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgive I. In the person of Christ.

And then he says, Lest Satan should get an advantage of us. For we are not ignorant of his devices. You know, I've used that verse, the latter part of that verse, that we are not ignorant of his devices.

And I never realized, I don't think I ever realized the whole verse until this morning. That he's talking about forgiveness. You know, the devices of our enemy could be many things, but in this specific verse, he was talking about forgiveness.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us. Sometimes this, the only way to get that root out is to start over and to just come completely surrendered to the Lord Jesus.

I had to think of when I first started working with computers, a few years into it, we had a computer that went bad and we tried and tried to fix it and I don't know if you've ever experienced this with desktop computers, but they can get a virus or a corruption.

[ 42 : 21 ] And sometimes when that happens, the only thing left to do is to just purge the thing. Just delete everything, every data that was on it and start over.

Sometimes our hearts need some purging and we need to allow the data to be erased. Just get rid of it. Just say, God, I just give it to you and just surrender it all to Him so that there's no corruption, so that we can function properly.

We had one of those cases just recently on a computer and it wasn't quite gone. It still worked, but just barely. It was so frustrating. You never knew when the next page was going to work or not work and so on.

But just the picture of that in our life when we have a root of bitterness. It's just not going to work right. Things won't come out in a pure way.

He will deliver us from that root and replace it with love, with compassion, like happened with my dad. I remember the first thing that happened, Laverne, when I forgave my dad of all those things was that I had compassion.

[ 43 : 46 ] for his soul. And I just, I remember the other day Laverne texted us and said he had a burden for his mom and dad and if we would pray for him down there in Colorado.

And that comes from a heart of forgiveness. If you wouldn't forgive them, you couldn't do that. You wouldn't have that compassion, that desire to see them set free.

Compassion, joy, great peace and freedom when we choose to forgive. It's a choice. But we must make that choice.

Many times our offenses come from those that were or are in authority over us. A preacher is the first one I wrote down or a church organization.

You know, we think of the abuse of excommunication, the abuse of power of power and authority and how that hurts many people.

[ 44 : 59 ] We feel very rejected by that and yet they're seeking the Lord. What do we do with that stuff?

We need to forgive. We're not hurting them by holding them in unforgiveness anyway. The only person we're hurting is ourselves.

It's like somebody said, we're drinking the poison and hoping it hurts the other person. We would never do that in real life, would we? Naturally.

But with this one we tend to do that. A father, a mother. I've been in prisons enough times, it's been quite a long while since we went, but every time I come out of those prison crusades I just realize all the pain, all the hurt and it's usually father and mother related or some best friend.

But they have so much unforgiveness and to see an inmate let go of that is just so beautiful. To see their heart set free, you know, it doesn't set that other person free, but it sets their heart free.

[ 46 : 24 ] Real victory. To see that victory and that forgiveness, how free they become. Forgiveness commits the offender to God, but it allows us to go free.

Joseph and many other Bible characters including our Lord Jesus. They did not hold grudges, but they forgave.

Will you give God all the pain you have been carrying and allow him to heal you? We heard a testimony not long ago here of healing of somebody that was healed.

Jesus, by his stripes we are healed. Jesus forgave the very ones that pounded the nails into his body.

You know, we think how cruel, how could they do that? But it was our sin that put him there. It was our sin.

[ 47 : 37 ] That's why Jesus gave that story in Matthew 18. He forgave us so much. It was our sin that put him on the cross.

Will we lay down our pride today and forgive others their trespasses? God wants every professing Christian to be free of unforgiveness.

this is his word. You know, I need this as much as anyone. I need this reminder for my own life.

Jesus said offenses will come and they do. Seems like we've had plenty of those. Things that we could have gotten, you know, just let it fester and let it destroy us.

Let it shut us up and I heard that from several other ministers down there. I don't know if it was several or many, but the things that come that are meant to silence the truth from our enemy, the devil.

[ 48 : 48 ] We could become offended and bitter. But do we desire to be that pure vessel that God can use? Do you want to be used by God?

Or do you just want to be that quote struggling Christian that can't forgive? that one song we sang this morning just really touched me on this subject even because this unforgiveness will hinder the open wells of grace and salvation.

We sang that song. Lord, I am fondly, earnestly longing into thy holy likeness to grow, thirsting for more and deeper communion, yearning thy love more fully to know.

Dead to the world, dead to those offenses that come. By the way, if we're dead, if we're crucified, we can have great peace.

It won't affect us. Dead unto sin, alive unto thee, crucify all the earthly within me, emptied of offenses, says sin in the song, but I just threw in those and self may I be.

[ 50 : 12 ] I would be thine and serve thee forever, filled with thy spirit, lost in thy love. Come to my heart, Lord, come with anointing, showers of grace sent down from above.

Wow, what a song, what a vision that we could be a people that are filled. And I wonder sometimes how much these things, how much I allow these things to stop me or to slow me down in the Christian walk because I don't choose to bring them to the cross right away.

Why don't you stand if you can? let's just give ourselves to the creator, to our savior, to our lord.

And if there are things in our hearts that have never really been dealt with or made right, let's just do that now. Let's not wait. Let's just ask God to set us free.

Father, we come to you. We thank you this morning that you are the giver of life, that you have provided a way, even if the roots go deep, if that should exist in our hearts, Lord, the roots of bitterness, of unforgiveness that was caused by offenses.

[ 51 : 39 ] Lord, we just ask that you would take those roots, just pluck them up out of our lives, Lord. We just bring them to the cross and ask God that you would just set us free from those things that hinder us from going on and going deeper with you.

Lord, those things that hinder us from being used in your kingdom the way you desire, Father, I pray that you would show us those. And Lord, that you'd help us to give them to you, to repent from them, to take ownership and do something about it because nobody else will.

Lord, it's our choice. And Father, just give us the grace and the strength to walk with you in this, to set us free, Lord. Father, just for all those listening in or whatever, Lord, if there's anyone that is struggling, Father, I pray that your grace would just come upon us and we would see your word and we would have trust and confidence in your word that when you tell us that we need, we must forgive to be forgiven.

Lord, I pray that that would be a reality in our hearts and that your word would be our guide, our authority. So, Lord, we ask this all in Jesus' name, trusting you.

In your name we pray. Amen.